

have unquestioningly accepted the status quo. Far from it—these chapters draw attention to the calls for reform articulated by long-standing political parties—such as the Islamic Action Front (a sibling organization to Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood)—and new manifestations of contentious collection action; for example, the Jordanian Youth Movement or “Hirak.”

The middle section of the book—chapters 5–7—covers identity and institutional politics. CRS estimates that “Jordanians of Palestinian origin” make up a majority (perhaps even more than two-thirds) of the population. Yet, although the cleavage between those who trace their roots to Palestine and those who identify as “East Bank” Jordanians is salient, it is also fluid. Recalling fieldwork in 1989 and in 2010–11, Ryan notes that the “ethnicity” Jordanians assigned others was often endogenous to the political debate at hand, because “detractors. . . use identity issues to ‘change’ an opponent’s ethnicity to undermine that opponent’s legitimacy in Jordanian public life” (p. 106).

Elections have been no less mercurial. The opposition performed poorly in national polls in 2010, 2013, and 2016 because of a combination of rules benefiting pro-regime candidates and its own failure to mobilize broader constituencies. The upshot of these developments is that “reform,” the subject of chapter 7, consistently fell short of what the regime’s critics would consider “actual advancement or meaningful change” (p. 172).

If one were to distill the bottom-line finding from these rich empirics, it would be that Jordanians, in the aggregate, appear substantially more content than an outside observer might expect they would be, given the country’s demographic strains, political corruption, security state, and outmoded authority structures. This level of general satisfaction—which, Ryan stresses, ought not to be confused with quiescence—may have separated Jordan, and its vigorous protests, from the revolutionary situations in Tunisia and Egypt.

Such a proximate account, if persuasive, draws attention to more distal factors. In the book’s closing pages, one ex-official captures the conundrum of the Jordanian regime: “It’s not sustainable. . . it’s just sustained anyway” (p. 222). So why? Why, in the twenty-first century, is an absolutist-but-resource-poor monarchy relatively popular and remarkably stable?

Chapter 8, “War, Refugees, and Regional Insecurity,” points to one salient reason: “the politics of securitization” (p. 177). Here Ryan underscores the tremendous pressures the Jordanian regime has withstood over the past decade. The Syrian civil war and accompanying inflow of refugees placed severe “strains on Jordan’s economy, social services, water resources. . . especially in the context of an economic recession in a deeply indebted country” (p. 187). The rise of the Islamic State compounded the humanitarian challenge with a new military struggle.

These same challenges, however, delivered opportunities for the regime to collect rents from regional and western powers, chief among them the United States. According to CRS, Jordan enjoys one of the longest foreign aid relationships with Washington, receiving some \$20 billion in US aid since the 1950s (two-thirds of which went to military aid). In 2019, Jordan ranked behind Afghanistan and Israel as the world’s third-largest recipient of foreign aid, economic and security. (These resource flows show no sign of abating; a 2018 memorandum of understanding stipulated Washington will “provide \$1.275 billion per year in bilateral foreign assistance over a five-year period for a total of \$6.375 billion [FY2018–FY2022].”) This ample material backstop invites further research, which one hopes Ryan and other astute Jordan watchers will undertake.

Emigrants Get Political: Mexican Migrants Engage Their Home Towns. By Michael S. Danielson. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. 264p. \$78.00 cloth.

Specters of Belonging: The Political Life Cycle of Mexican Migrants. By Adrián Félix. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019. 200p. \$99.00 cloth, \$26.95 paper.
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— Alexandra Délano Alonso, *The New School*
delanoa@newschool.edu

The question of how migrants’ political participation affects local and national politics has been a focus of migration and diaspora studies for many years, and it continues to generate important debates that challenge the boundaries of citizenship, sovereignty, democracy, membership, and belonging—particularly as new modalities for absentee voting, migrant candidacies, and migrant-led investment projects have developed in recent decades. Michael S. Danielson’s and Adrián Félix’s studies make an important contribution to this literature, both empirically and methodologically, by examining how Mexican migrants’ migration experiences influence their modes of political participation, across the United States and in Mexico. Through comparative analyses of subnational contexts and the use of qualitative and quantitative methods, both authors shed light on the multiple, complex factors that determine whether and how migrants exercise political agency in their origin countries and when this is a democratizing force or not.

Félix’s main contribution in *Specters of Belonging: The Political Life Cycle of Mexican Migrants* is to explore transnational political participation through various processes and stages—what he calls “the migrant political life-cycle” (p. 13)—from naturalization to candidacies for office in Mexico or the posthumous repatriation of bodies. Although it may be limiting to establish the beginning of the political cycle in the moment of naturalization—because other forms of political participation precede or

even exclude this process—the value of looking at these three moments where transnational identities are expressed and negotiated is that they demonstrate how all of these processes of political participation are affected by structural conditions of exclusion, discrimination, and racism on both sides of the border.

Through a political ethnography of transnational citizenship that draws on participant observation and the author's direct involvement as a teacher in naturalization programs in Southern California, as well as his experience accompanying migrant candidates on the campaign trail in Zacatecas, the study reveals the complex motivations of migrants' political participation and its possibilities and limitations given political and social contexts in Mexico and the United States. The book adds a new layer to critiques of citizenship by demonstrating how, despite attaining and exercising legal rights within these regimes, migrants "remain caught between imperial citizenship in the United States and clientelistic citizenship in Mexico" (p. 100). Even within these limitations, Félix argues that migrants continue to deploy their "diasporic dialectics"—a useful concept that he introduces to describe the "iterative process by which migrants are in constant political struggle and negotiation with the state and its institutions of citizenship on both sides of the border" (p. 8).

Félix examines the extent to which these processes contribute to democratizing political belonging in both exclusive and restrictive membership regimes and their internal boundaries of differential citizenship, concluding that corruption, violence, and cartelization of politics in Mexico and structures of discrimination in the United States limit the possibility for full transnational political participation; at the same time, these forces continue to shape transnational identities, practices, and forms of belonging. For example, Félix presents the experiences of rapport and solidarity that take place in a citizenship classroom in Southern California, where the hopes and challenges of membership and belonging—within and beyond the naturalization process—are shared, as a space of empowerment that resists singular allegiances. On the Mexican side, examining party politics and migrants running for or appointed to office in Zacatecas, Félix shows the contradictions of migrant identities in relation to a corrupt party system that can either co-opt or alienate them, resulting in complex dynamics that determine their ability to participate in building democratic processes or institutions—aspects further explored in Danielson's book, as detailed next. The author argues that migrant political actors who envision their constituency as residing on both sides of the border can be agents of transnational citizenship—but only if they resist the allure of the Mexican party system's patronage.

One of the most interesting aspects of Félix's study is its focus on posthumous repatriation as another manifes-

tation of political transnationalism, which has been under-explored in the existing literature. Examining Mexican consular politics around repatriation, Félix argues that it is not an apolitical trans-state activity, but rather one that has profound political implications for both countries involved. Although the implications examined here are quite different from his other two case studies—the citizenship regime in the United States or electoral politics in Mexico—Félix argues that this act of sociocultural transnationalism can become a pathway into subsequent political transnationalism where cross-border identities, loyalties, and orientations live on and often materialize after death, perpetuating transborder ties among surviving members.

The book's fundamental contribution of extending the debate around political transnationalism to the moment of death and posthumous transnational practices demonstrates the importance of including various processes and forms of political participation, formal and informal, within and beyond citizenship regimes, to expand definitions and analyses of practices of belonging and membership across borders. Written with passion and references to a wide range of materials, including songs, Mexican proverbs, and personal experiences, Félix's study weaves in the politics and the poetics of belonging, giving his analysis a depth and complexity that are much needed in transnational studies.

Michael S. Danielson's book, *Emigrants Get Political: Mexican Migrants Engage Their Home Towns*, delves into one particular aspect of these transnational processes: whether returned migrants' political participation in origin countries in effect has a democratizing effect. His study, an impressive mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative and qualitative data in an accessible and compelling way, with depth and nuance, challenges existing assumptions by exposing multiple factors and dimensions at play in migrants' political participation at the subnational level. Ultimately, he concludes that the positive and negative effects of migrant participation depend on a range of intervening factors, of which the nature of interactions between migrant and nonmigrant political actors in states and municipalities, their alliances with dominant political groups or opposition groups, and the prevailing institutional structures have a significant impact. Similarly to Félix, Danielson describes how a Mexican party system characterized by corruption and clientelistic practices ensures that, even if migrants engage socially and politically in their communities of origin, this does not necessarily enhance local democracy. But Danielson goes further in explicitly challenging the idea that migrants form a natural constituency for political opposition or remit more democratic attitudes and behaviors based on their time living and working in the United States.

Through a comparative analysis of municipalities in three states—Oaxaca, Guanajuato, and Zacatecas—and contextualized descriptions and personal trajectories of

men and women migrants who have run for election or held office, Danielson approaches the question of why some migrants engage in local politics and what makes them successful. His is a nuanced perspective that reveals as much about local politics in origin countries as it does about political transnationalism. On the one hand, it shows that in the face of Mexico's uneven democratic transition, the mechanisms for migrant political participation and the impact of such activities are limited. At the same time, even though it is clear that the migration experience shapes political identities and behaviors, this experience is not monolithic. Danielson's nuanced understanding of these different subnational contexts and individual experiences allows for a deep exploration of various forms and stages of transnational connections and political participation—shaped by remote communications, return visits, meetings, and negotiations with elected authorities in migrant-receiving places; transfer of financial or in-kind resources for the community; funding of public works projects or political campaigns; and formation of civil society organizations.

Danielson reveals some of the paradoxes of migrant political engagement, where the expectation that their election or appointment to public office might lift up marginalized groups does not necessarily materialize, because returning migrants are often better off than local communities and therefore are not seen as representative of their interests. In many cases, it is precisely their migration experience that allows them access to political power and establishes a new political class, but this does not necessarily imply an improved representation of popular classes. In fact, in most cases, migrants who enjoy recognition and representation in the local political system are incorporated into dominant political groups. Thus, counter to his own initial optimism, Danielson concludes that “noteworthy levels of social capital, status, and wealth, help migrant political actors to gain local influence, but it proves very difficult for them to bring fundamental changes to the way politics are done back home” (p. 183).

Another paradox is the fact that, even though migrant engagement in some cases does increase democratic competition and weakens the grip of dominant political parties, it can also often devolve into conflict and factionalism at the municipal level, rather than build toward a consolidated democracy. The case of indigenous communities in Oaxaca is significant because their strong communal norms, practices, traditions, and identities determine strong transnational ties between migrants and their home communities, which can have a positive correlation with political representation and pluralism. But common responses of the Oaxacan state and local governments to the emergence of migrant actors as political subjects have been exclusion and repression, which are explained, according to Danielson, by the

absence of institutionalized channels through which migrants can gain authentic representation.

Danielson's book sounds a powerful and persuasive cautionary note regarding the democratizing promise or ideal of migrant political participation—a phenomenon that is increasingly the subject of scholarly inquiry (see recent works by Burgess, Duquette-Rury, Krawatzek and Muller-Funk, and Perez Armendariz, for example) and that needs to be amply considered in public debates and policies focused on absentee voting rights, migrant candidacies, or political empowerment within migrant communities. Even if the channels through which migrants participate and become influential politically become clearer and in some cases more open, Danielson reminds us that “this does not necessarily tell us what the nature of their influence is likely to be” (p. 18). In the Mexican case, migrants have had a mixed role in the construction of an inclusive subnational democracy, and the systemic barriers to building it are deeply entrenched.

Although they raise similar questions, these two books offer different perspectives and methodologies that complement each other and open up new areas of inquiry within the fields of transnationalism, migration and diaspora studies, citizenship, and subnational politics. The value of their in-depth ethnographic study of the Mexican case and their mixed-methods (and, notably, the datasets that Danielson offers) will surely be to enhance future comparative analyses of migrant participation in other local contexts and in other countries. With changing migration dynamics in the region, studies such as these provide essential elements for understanding migrants' processes of political participation in the United States and Mexico, including naturalization and voting rates, absentee voting, and the changing dynamics of participation in local politics in Mexico. These studies will be invaluable as further analyses consider new and important questions that are reshaping the political, economic, and social landscape in the two countries. This includes the differences in transnational engagement and political participation between migrants who return voluntarily versus those who are deported, or the political role of dual citizens who were brought from the United States to Mexico at a young age as a result of their parents' forced return.

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— Kirk A. Hawkins, *Brigham Young University*
kirk.hawkins@byu.edu

In Regime Support Beyond the Balance Sheet: Participation and Policy Performance in Latin America, Matthew